

## REMARKS

The claims are 1-7.

Claims 1-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Masuda et al. (US 6,428,856) in view of Bäbler (US 5,648,408) with Ohtomo et al. (US 5,475,049), Chase (US 3,102,856) and Ashton et al. (US 3,684,197) for the reasons of record.

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The essential feature of the process of the present invention is that when a multi-layer coating film is to be produced by applying, to a substrate, intermediate paint, metallic paint and clear paint by 3C1B method, said intermediate paint must contain:

(a) 0.5 to 5 phr of flat talc powder

of a size of:

(b) 0.5 to 10 $\mu$ m in the longer direction and

(c) be 0.01 to 1  $\mu$ m in thickness,

and have:

(d) a total pigment content of 40 to 100 phr.

Thus, in accordance with the present invention, the combination of the above-mentioned features (a), (b), (c) and (d) is critical to the objective of the present invention, so that an improvement of chipping resistance and smoothness may be achieved. When even one of the above-mentioned four features is lacking, the objective of the present invention fails to be fully attained.

In order to demonstrate the criticality of the combination of the above-mentioned features (a), (b), (c) and (d), enclosed herewith is a Rule 132 Declaration by Yasushi Nakao who is one of co-inventors of this application.

It will be understood from the data which are shown in Tables 1 and 2 of the Declaration that satisfying the above-mentioned four features (a), (b), (c) and (d) simultaneously is critical so that a multi-layer coating which is excellent both in chipping resistance and smoothness may be obtained.

The combination of the above-mentioned features (a), (b), (c) and (d) is neither taught nor suggested by Ohtomo et al., Chase, Ashton et al., Masuda et al. or Bäbler.

These references are discussed in the previous response on pages 3-5 and this discussion in the previous response is incorporated by reference herein.

For the foregoing reasons taken with the attached Rule 132 Declaration, it is apparent that the rejection on prior art is untenable and should be withdrawn.

No further issues remaining, allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any comments or proposals for expediting prosecution, please contact undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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